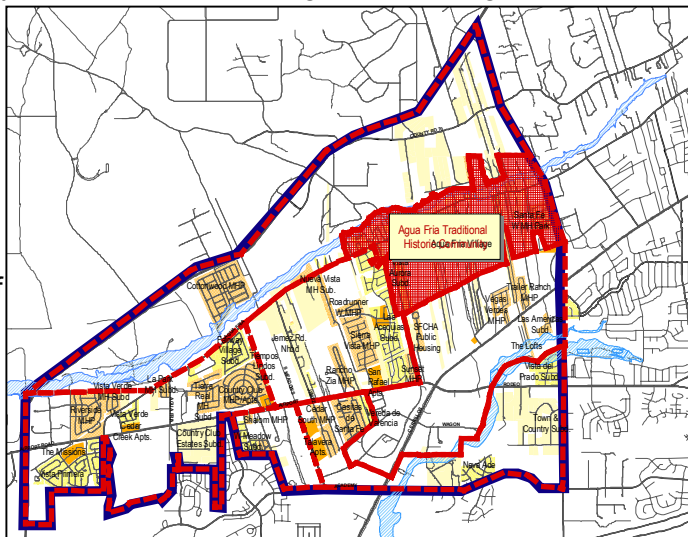


Agua Fria Traditional Historic Community (THC)

Status of the Village of Agua Fria

The Village of Agua Fria represents the historical and cultural core of Santa Fe's southwest sector. During the early to mid-1990's, the Agua Fria Village responded to potential annexation by the City of Santa Fe through a state law which enables certain historic communities to be designated as Traditional Historic Communities (THC). This designation allows for communities to be excluded from the extraterritorial zone and extraterritorial zoning authority of a municipality and instead to be subject to the zoning jurisdiction of the county in which the greatest portion of the traditional historic community lies.¹ In addition, annexation of a THC can only be achieved through the petition or arbitration method upon request by a majority of the registered qualified voters within the THC.² The Santa Fe County Board of County Commissioners declared the Village of Agua Fria a Traditional Historic Community through Ordinance 1995-8. The boundary for the THC was amended via Santa Fe County Ordinance No. 1996-16.³



Map 2.7.1 Agua Fria Traditional Historic Community

Agua Fria Traditional Community

The Village of Agua Fria is also designated as a Traditional Community (TC) in the Santa Fe County Land Development Code. The Traditional Community concept was devised to identify areas in the County which already had densities higher than the hydrologic studies that the 1980 General Plan allowed. Traditional Communities were established to convey that resources, especially water, were limited and that the boundaries should not be expanded without regard for these



During the workshops, the San Ysidro Church was often referred to as the heart of the Community

¹ See NM Stat. Ann. 1978, §3-21-1.E.

² See NM Stat. Ann. 1978, §3-7-1.1.

³ Ordinance 1996-16 allows owners of property outside of but contiguous to the boundaries of the THC to request inclusion into THC.

limitations. Upon designation as either a TC or a THC, the County Commission may appoint a local development review committee consisting of business owners, property owners, and/or residents of that community. The committee is a development review body with limited legal authority regarding platting, zoning and subdivision regulations. The committee has recommendation authority to the Board of County Commissioners with regard to variances, plats, master plans and zoning. The Board of County Commissioners established the Agua Fria Community Development Review Committee in 1996. Additionally, as a Traditional Community, the Village of Agua Fria may approach the Board of County Commissioners to begin a community plan.

Community Planning Process

Santa Fe County adopted a Community Planning Program in Article XIII of the Land Development Code through Santa Fe County Ordinance 1998-5.⁴ The intent of community planning is to encourage and assist communities to organize themselves and identify both problems and solutions within their community. It is also intended to create a process whereby community members and the County jointly learn and document how development and growth both impact and can be directed to benefit individual communities within the context of and according to the principles of the County Growth Management Plan (GMP).

The community planning ordinance mandates that communities first create a Planning Committee recognized by the Board of County Commissioners, publicize the process, and address specific issues such as transportation and water. The process also recommends that the planning committee make decisions based on consensus, not majority voting. Zoning in the Village of Agua Fria may be altered if a Community Plan is developed and adopted using the County's Community Planning process. Thus, the Village of Agua Fria may create a Community Plan to guide and direct growth and future land uses in accordance with the Santa Fe County Community Planning Ordinance. The Village of Agua Fria has not, as of the date of this report, developed a Community Plan.⁵

Relationship to the Southwest Area Master Planning Process

Because the Village of Agua Fria is under the jurisdiction of Santa Fe County's Land Development Code, it is not the intent nor is it the purpose of the SWAP process to suggest or impose land use guidelines for the area. The difficulty herein lies in the fact that the area that is subject to the master planning process completely envelops the THC and has the potential of greatly impacting (both positively and negatively) the community as a whole. It is for this reason that the Village of Agua Fria has been asked to participate and provide constructive comment on the master plan as a whole as it relates to the Village itself.

⁴ The Community Planning Ordinance was revised to refine and clarify the planning process through Ordinance 2002- 3.

⁵ Initiation of a Community Plan has been discussed at several of the neighborhood workshops. There has also been some discussion that the process be accomplished through a joint city/county program since the Village of Agua Fria community bears a strong relationship to both jurisdictions.

This process is not intended to allow one planning area to raise or question the neighborhood vision of another—it simply allows the Village of Agua Fria community to respond to perceived impacts and define a list of priority statements and recommendations as to how the Village can further protect its own unique integrity and how to best respond proactively to future growth. These statements will then become the community's contribution to this process and will be incorporated as part of the neighborhood-planning chapter.

In restating this process, the concept is to provide an opportunity for Village of Agua Fria residents to express their perceptions of future growth and how it will ultimately affect their community. It further allows community members the opportunity to provide a series of action statements in how best to manage future growth impacts within their own regulatory framework.

In preparation for their final workshop, community members of the Village of Agua Fria⁶ were asked to review a preliminary draft of the master plan, including the other six neighborhood plans. The participants were asked to consider three related questions as part of that review and for more detailed discussion at the workshop:

- 1) What types of positive impacts, specific to the Agua Fria Traditional Historic Community and Traditional Community status, may result from implementation of the Master Plan? What types of further planning, regulation or controls would need to be created in order to realize those results?
- 2) Conversely, what types of negative impacts may result or be expected? What types of tools or mechanisms need to be created or implemented for the Village of Agua Fria in order to effectively mitigate those impacts?
- 3) If the Village of Agua Fria were to prioritize a list of implementation methods (including but not limited to those listed above), in what order would they best be applied? What actions does the Village perceive are necessary in order to protect the cultural and historical integrity of the Community itself?

Community Impacts, Prioritization and Action Statements

Property owners and residents of Agua Fria Village met to discuss the aforementioned questions over the course of two worksessions. Although the participants chose to deviate to some degree from the questions that had been posed to them earlier, several key themes emerged or were repeatedly referenced as part of those discussions.

The first worksession was intended to focus on both the positive and negative impacts that the Village perceived would result from adoption and implementation of the plan. The results included the following observations:

Possible Positive Impacts from a Plan for the Area:

- Planning process could provide the following benefits:

⁶ Participation includes representation from the Agua Fria Village Association as well as the Agua Fria Development Review Committee.

- Offer greater balance between what the community wants and what it needs for the future.
- Help plan for and monitor future road and circulation patterns and related issues.
- Provide community self-determination.
- Establish criteria for appropriate zoning (land use compatibility).
- A plan could provide for (small) connections between neighborhoods.
- A plan could create open space, both through preservation/protection of lands and preservation of long-lot semi-rural patterns.
- A plan could establish and communicate the *Agua Fria Community Identity* [emphasis added].
 - Re-establish the importance of the El Camino Real and its relationship to the Village and the Santa Fe River.
 - Create and build upon a river theme, such as a park and trail.
 - Provide public access to the river as a recreational amenity.
 - Restore the river through:
 - ◆ Continued COLTPAC acquisitions along the river.
 - ◆ “Cleanup” the mining areas and illegal dumping.
 - ◆ Address infrastructure and utility problems along the river, such as drainage/bank stabilization, exposed pipes, crossings and power lines.

Several concerns were also raised in relation to the planning process or the consequences of adopting an area plan. These included:

- Concern regarding the disconnect between a plan and its stated intent and its implementation and interpretation.
- Need for better communication between jurisdictions and departments so that the intent of the plan is carried forward.
- Need for carrying out a plan as was intended. There was expressed interest in establishing guidelines for plan amendments, both for creating a review process and who would consider the amendments. Some type of oversight body should follow plan implementation.
- Clear conveyance of the intent—there was expressed interest in assuring that the intent of a plan is clearly conveyed so that changes could be judged in accordance irrespective of time or changes to recommending and elected bodies.

Several specific issues were raised about the planning process in general. These included the need for *coordination between jurisdictions, reconsideration of the boundary of the current THC, need for rural protection, desire for broader community involvement by the Village, need for a comprehensive community area plan for the Village, and interest in providing some kind of land use transition between the rural patterns and the urban areas.*

The second workshop was intended to expand the discussion and move toward goal setting and prioritization. Although the participants did not formally prioritize goals for future planning for the community, there were clearly some recurring themes in that discussion. These are not necessarily listed in order of importance, but rather reflect the issues or goals that seemed to be the most widely accepted in that group.

- *The need to establish a clear Agua Fria community identity.* This was probably the most articulated goal from the two worksessions. There was also an expressed interest in accomplishing this goal through a community area planning process for the Village area.
- *The need to revisit and/or reaffirm the current THC boundaries.* In wake of the annexation discussions of the Southwest Area, there has been increasing pressure by property owners and residents within the greater Agua Fria community to re-verify that the current THC boundaries are representative of their community. There was also recognition of the immediacy to do so in light of the pending annexation process.
- *The desire for rural protection.* There was some consensus among the participants regarding the idea of rural protection and possibly a rural protection ordinance, however, there were differing opinions as to what type of protection was needed. There were some participants who felt that vacant lands should be protected as open space, some who felt that rural densities should be encourage/protected, and others who felt that culture and heritage should be protected⁷. In other words, there was a difference in how “rural” was defined and perceived. Some equated the idea of rural to density—some to land patterns. Despite the differing viewpoints, there was general agreement that Agua Fria needed some type of protection from encroaching urbanization. In conjunction, there was also need for some type of separation or compatibility standards where the Village and urban lands were to abut one another.
- *There were continued concerns over the effects of continued urbanization on the Village as a whole.* If some areas north of the river and along Agua Fria Road and Rufina Street were to develop at urban patterns and densities, how would they affect community identity and lifestyles? How can two competing patterns exist together without compromising either? How would further urbanization affect existing infrastructure including water and roads? How would urbanization affect their current quality of life?

Although this master planning process was not intended to be a community area planning process for the Agua Fria community, the discussions that have taken place with the Village thus far have articulated the need and desire for their own community area plan. There seems to be general acceptance of this need as well. There is also consensus that the historical and cultural identity of the Agua Fria community needs to be defined as it is today, and there needs to be some guidance as to what it should be tomorrow. Once this is clearly understood, then there needs to be movement to preserving its integrity.

It is anticipated that the Agua Fria community will soon undertake discussions with the County as to when and how a community area plan shall be conducted, as well as the THC boundary issue. Although this master plan does not include a community area plan for the Village itself, it is believed that the dialogue that has begun in response to this

⁷ This was particular to the ability to convey land through family transfer and the continual subdivision of lands through the family. This view was more closely linked to land patterns than density.

process will lead to furthering community identity and preservation and protection of the Village in the future.